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EC476 Planning the Family Wardrobe

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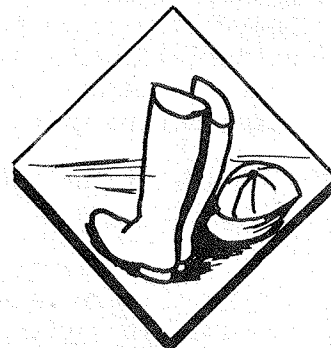
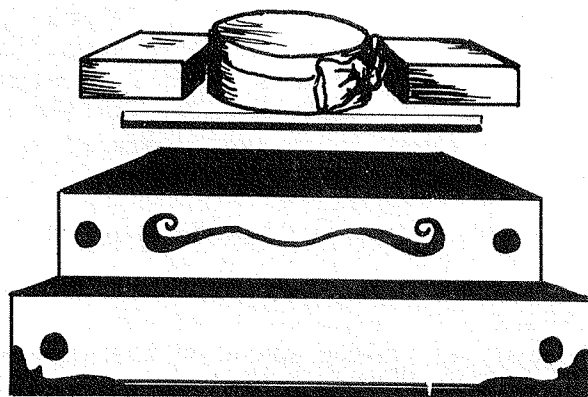
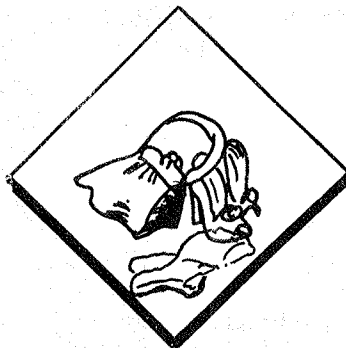
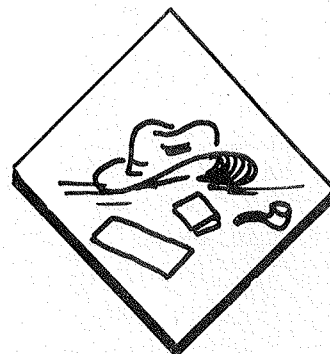
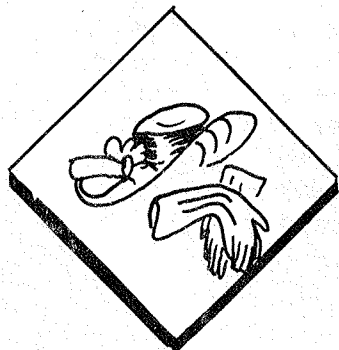
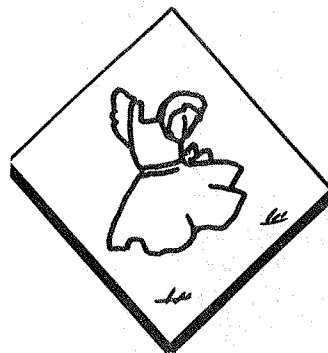
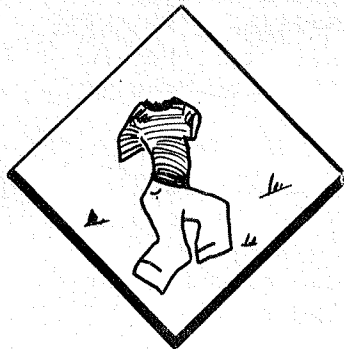
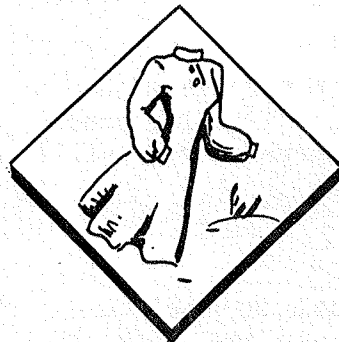
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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
H. G. Gould, Acting Director, Lincoln

Planning the Family Wardrobe

Clothing is an important part of family living, ranking second among the three essentials of life--food, clothing, and shelter. As an industry, clothing employs millions of people, and the volume of business centered about it makes it one of our greatest industries. For the individual, clothing provides protection for health and morale, maintains confidence through beauty, and develops self respect and poise.

The importance of clothing to the individual family varies according to the work they do, the ages of the family members, the community in which they live, and their social activities and demands. There is no substitute for being suitably dressed. Families are judged by the clothes they wear, not for style necessarily, but for neatness, attractiveness, and suitability.



How Much Shall We Spend for Clothing

The actual amount to be set aside for clothes is a personal matter for each family to decide. There is no standard for what should be spent for clothing. The needs of an individual or his personal preferences, as well as his social demands, may vary from year to year. The wear and tear on garments is not the same yearly. Again, the price of clothing varies widely, and qualities of the items of clothing offered for sale vary even more than the prices.

It is not the amount of money you spend on your wardrobe that counts--it's the thought you give to making it well coordinated--every article filling some definite need in your whole clothing plan. Many families are surprisingly well dressed on small amounts of money.

How Mrs. Well Dressed Manages

Here are suggestions from one woman who manages to be suitably dressed on a small income. "First of all, I do a lot of planning. I consider the needs of each member of the family - where we go, what we do, and what we need to wear to be suitably dressed for these different social and business activities. Pretty clothes are important to a girl in high school and she should have them, but we need to watch that not too much is spent on her clothes while other members of the family are slighted.

"I usually get along on about as little new clothing as any of the family, but we do watch that not so much is spent on the daughters that I have nothing for myself. I feel that I owe it to my husband and children to look my best and to be as well dressed as they. Sometimes Mothers neglect their own clothing for the sake of other members of the family - then feel shabby in the presence of their children's friends, or hesitate to go places with them.

"I consider the needs of the family, not for them but with them in family council. Then we plan for each member of the family - Jane is a junior in high school and goes to a great many parties and school events so needs a number of dresses. She is going to make her party dress as a part of her 4-H clothing project. John hasn't reached the age where he is interested in dressing up, but he has a record for wearing out and out-growing the everyday variety of clothes. The five year old wears out lots of shoes - so each members clothing needs are considered in our plan."

Does Your Family Have A Clothing Plan?

What practices can your family follow to help you obtain the most satisfaction from your clothing dollar? Many families have found records and plans helpful. Accurate records of the amounts spent for clothing help to check on satisfaction received, to plan for another year, to find what items of clothing take the largest share of the money spent, and where adjustments to correct mistakes may be made.

A clothing plan is important and profitable because:

1. It helps keep the family comfortably and becomingly dressed for the occasions required.
2. It helps avoid using an unfair share of the income for clothing.
3. It serves as a guide in making decisions.
4. It is flexible and does not hinder or interfere with happiness in clothing selection.
5. It gives an appreciation of the amount of money invested in clothing.

It is far better to plan on expenditures for a normal, average year than to refuse to plan because the coming year may be different. If abnormal demands come, the money can be spent to best advantage at the time, and there is sure to be more available than had no plan been made.

Some members of the family may prefer to have their clothing planned for and purchased by the homemaker; others will prefer to make their own plan and handle their own clothing money. No two families will have exactly the same needs or means so each family will want to work out its own plan in the way which will make the best use of its ability, equipment, and income.

Suggestions for Making and Using A Plan

There are three steps in making a Clothing Plan for family members:



1. Make an inventory of clothing, listing in classified groups the useful clothing on hand.
2. List in the same way all of the articles of clothing required by the person making the plan or for whom the plan is made, based on his work and social needs.
3. Estimate the cost of each article to be purchased, and the cost of renovating or remodeling those on hand.

- a. Compare the total anticipated cost of clothing to be purchased with the amount of money available for clothing for a year.
- b. If the amount of money required exceeds the amount available then eliminate first the articles that are least necessary, and reduce either the quality or quantity of the others.

Some individuals and families find that a three-year clothing plan is more successful than a one-year plan. Such plans indicate when it will probably be necessary to replace the more expensive garments. It is more readily seen how this cost can be alternated and spread so that the expense for no one year is excessive. With the clothing plan in mind we are now ready to turn our attention to some thrifty buying practices. (A suggested form for a check list is included).

Thrifty Clothing Practices

Plan your new purchases for the entire season using your inventory as a guide.

1. Buy articles that will harmonize with garments or accessories now on hand.
2. Use informative labels on materials and garments giving information about:
 - a. Color fastness to light, washing, etc.
 - b. Kind of fiber.
 - c. Shrinkage.
 - d. Laundering or cleaning qualities.
 - e. Sizing or weighting.
 - f. Permanence of finish.

Ask the sales person questions about non-observable facts, guarantees, etc.



3. Consider the wear you expect to give the article of clothing and choose material appropriate for that wear. Notice how the material is woven and if the yarns pull or slip easily. Generally fabrics made of durable yarns, with a firm, balanced weave, give long service.
4. Examine ready-made clothes as to width of seams, hems, finishes, and reinforcements. Consider the serviceability of trimmings used and allowance for alterations.
5. Notice how the garment is cut. If it is not cut with the grain of the material, it will not fit well, wear well, or hold its shape.
6. Does the garment fit or will it require expensive alterations?
7. Consider the upkeep of the garment.
8. Compare the cost of garments made at home with ready-made garments, giving consideration to quality of material, fit, length of service, and choice in color and design.
9. Become familiar with terms describing new fibers and new finishing processes used on fabrics.
10. Choose good accessories -- those that go together and tie in with several costumes in your wardrobe. Undergarments, handkerchiefs, shoes, and many other standard articles may be purchased between seasons at a decided reduction from the regular price.
11. Do not buy in a hurry.
12. Do not be misguided by glowing phrases in advertising.
13. Be alert to sources of reliable information for the consumer, and obtain and study such information.
14. Get the most service from your clothes by:
 - A. Thoughtful care and repair of clothing.
 - (a) Use of hangers.
 - (b) Proper cleaning, airing, laundering, pressing, brushing.
 - B. Proper storage of clothing -- protection from dust, sun, and moths.
 - C. Use of protective garments when working as aprons, smocks, overalls, etc.
 - D. Use of personal protective measures as perspiration checks, deodorants.
 - E. Protection against dampness as overshoes, galoshes, raincoats, umbrella.
 - F. Frequent changes and laundering of undergarments and hose.
 - G. Resting garments -- wearing alternately two pairs of shoes.

References

Some of the sources from which you may obtain other consumer information on clothing are:

County Extension Office

Local Libraries

Household Finance Corporation, Chicago, Illinois

Sears Roebuck and Co., Consumer Education Division

Textile Educational Bureau, 401 Broadway, New York City

Cotton Textile Institute, 320 Broadway, New York City

Women's Magazines

American Viscose Corporation, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York City

CHECK-LIST FOR PLANNING YOUR WARDROBE

Directions: (Take an inventory of your present wardrobe by filling in the spaces below. The "blanks" in your wardrobe will be obvious. Then use the "need to buy" column as the basis for your shopping list. Use the last column to jot down any repairs that are necessary).

Basic Costume Dresses or Suits	Coats	Hats	Accessories Shoes, Gloves Purses	Need to Buy	How Much To Pay For It	Needs Fixing
Street Clothes						
Dressy Clothes						
House Dresses						
Miscellaneous						